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AUTHOR Eubanks, E.
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ABSTRACT

This paper presents two studies involving 97 teachers from six de facto segregated high schools in a large midwestern school district and their perceptions of the teacher attributes most essential for success in their school. The first study compares the responses of 47 teachers in white high schools with 50 teachers in black high schools on the teacher attribute variable, and the second study presents a comparison between 25 black teachers in black schools and 25 white teachers in black schools on this same variable. The test statistic used was Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient. Both studies demonstrated a significant high positive correlation between the groups on their choices of teacher attributes most essential for success in their school. The three attributes chosen most often by the respondents were competence in exercising discipline, ability to gain respect of pupils, and patience and self-assurance in the face of irritating or exasperating pupil behavior. (Author/HMD)

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Abstract

This paper presents a study of 97 teachers from six defacto segregated high schools in a large midwestern school district on their perceptions of the teacher attributes most essential for success in their school. The first study involves a comparison between 47 teachers in White High Schools as opposed to 50 teachers in Black High Schools on the teacher attribute variable and the second study presents a comparison between 25 Black teachers in Black Schools as opposed to 25 White teachers in Black Schools on this same variable. The test statistic, used, was Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient and both studies demonstrated a significant high positive correlation between the groups on their choices of teacher attribute most essential for success in their school.

E Eubanks
Asst Prof
U of Delaware
Newark, Del 19711

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Three Most Essential Teacher Attributes Needed for Success as Perceived by Teachers in Defacto Segregated Schools

In the late sixties and now in early seventies, much energy and massive output of resources are being expended to train and prepare teachers for the inner city schools. One of the reasons, given for this effort, is the personal attributes of a teacher needed for success in a inner city school are significantly different than those needed in the great mosaic of our other public schools. This writer having spent his entire teaching career in inner city schools accepted this premise as being valid until he obtained the results of this study in 1972.

The Problem

The schools of urban America are strongly defacto segregated, as demonstrated by the statistics of the Health, Education and Welfare Department. A large midwestern school district was selected for this study because it was a subset of the set of urban defacto segregated schools.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the beliefs of teachers in randomly selected comprehensive high schools in this District's School System having 99 or greater per cent of its enrollment black or 90 or greater per cent of its student enrollment white as to what are the most essential personal characteristics needed by a teacher to be successful in black and white defacto segregated high schools.

The Sample

The school district is a large metropolitan urban district in midwestern United States. In 1970 the district had 153,619 students, 88,558 (57.6%) were black. There are twelve comprehensive high schools in the system with a total student enrollment of 28,869; 15,988 (55.4%) are black.

The population of this study included all the full-time teachers employed in the defacto segregated high schools in the District; there are

ten high schools in this category. Six are defacto segregated black schools, student population 99 or greater per cent black, and four are defacto segregated white schools, student population 90 or greater per cent white (see Table 1).

The sample population included 120 teachers; 60 were selected from defacto segregated black schools and 60 were selected from defacto segregated white schools. The 60, chosen from the black schools, included 30 black teachers and 30 white teachers. The sample, from the white schools, included 52 white teachers and 8 black teachers.

Three schools were randomly selected from the six defacto segregated black schools and three were randomly selected from the four defacto segregated white schools. In each of the three selected black schools the teaching staff was placed into sets according to race; ten black teachers and ten white teachers were randomly selected from each school for a total sample size of sixty teachers for the black schools. The three selected white schools included only eight black teachers and they were all selected. The other fifty-two teachers were randomly selected from the white teaching staff so that twenty teachers were randomly chosen at each school for a total sample size of sixty teachers for the white schools.

There were 120 questionnaires sent out and 97 (80.8%) were returned; 50 out of 60 (83.3%) from the black schools and 47 out of 60 (78.3%) from the white schools. In the black schools an equal number of black and white teachers responded to the questionnaire, 25 out of 30 (83.3%). All 8 black teachers (100%) in the white schools responded to the questionnaire and 39 out of 52 (75%) white teachers in the white schools responded to the questionnaire.

TABLE 1.--Defacto Segregated Comprehensive High Schools in the District's Public Schools.

School	Number of Students	Number of Teachers	Racial Makeup of Student Body
1	3,146	129	99+% Black
2	1,894	84	99+% Black
3	2,789	104	99+% Black
4	1,783	77	99+% Black
5	2,381	98	99+% Black
6	2,932	116	99+% Black
7	1,680	72	99+% Black
8	2,818	105	94% White
9	1,929	77	94% White
10	3,165	124	96% White

The Methodology

The instrument used in this study, to collect the perceptions of teachers relative to their perceptions of essential personal teacher attributes needed for success in their school was a questionnaire entitled Teaching in Urban Schools developed by Richard Spillane. This questionnaire was used as a reference source and this researcher, through interviews with teachers in twelve urban school districts in Michigan as well as teachers from selected schools in the Cleveland Public Schools, made revisions in the questionnaire to encompass the general range of problems related to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the urban schools. Teachers were interviewed concerning their jobs and asked to complete and appraise the questionnaire. Their suggestions and insights were then incorporated into a final revision of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire, administered to the teachers, was essentially the same with the primary difference being the use of the terms black and predominate black in the questionnaire given to teachers in black schools, white in the white schools, the terms white, urban, and predominate white were substituted for them.

Procurement of Data

In March 1972, a copy of this researcher's dissertation proposal was sent to the Bureau of Research of the District's Public Schools requesting their cooperation and assistance in the completion of this project. The Bureau of Research responded that they intended to undertake a similar research project in the near future and therefore they would not be able to cooperate and assist in this research project. This researcher requested and was granted an audience with the deputy superintendent of schools, and again a request for cooperation and assistance was sought. The deputy

superintendent stated the District's School System would cooperate and assist if and only if changes in the population were made to include suburban school districts. This researcher decided that the purpose of this study could not be achieved if these changes were made, so a decision was made to complete the research pr ject without the assistance and approval of the District's School System.

This researcher, after failing to secure the approval of the administration in the District, sought and was able to secure the aid of the interested colleagues in the District's Public Schools in gathering up-to-date teacher lists for the sample schools. These lists contained the teachers' addresses and telephone numbers facilitating the random selection of twenty teachers from each of the six sample schools. The selectees were mailed a self-addressed postage-paid questionnaire requesting their assistance in the research. This initial contact was followed ten days later by a follow-up letter to the non-respondents. In addition to the follow-up letter, personal and telephone contact was made by resource persons in the schools seeking the completion of the questionnaires by the selectees. The total period for the procurement of the data was five weeks and ninety-seven (80.8%) completed the questionnaire sufficiently to allow for analyzation.

The Finding

Table 2, which follows, presents the 12 choices from which teachers in both Black and White high schools were asked to choose the 3 most essential attributes needed by a teacher to be successful in their school; also included in the table is the number and percent of teachers choosing this attribute. Table 3 presents data on the same 12 attributes using only teachers from Black high schools grouped according to race as subjects. Pearson's product

TABLE 2.--Three Most Essential Teacher Attributes Needed for Success as Perceived by Teachers In Defacto Segregated Schools.

Attribute	Number of Teachers In Black Schools Who Made The Attribute One Of Three Choices	Percent of Teachers In Black Schools Who Made The Attribute One Of Three Choices	Number of Teachers In White Schools Who Made The Attribute One Of Three Choices	Percent of Teachers In White Schools Who Made The Attribute One Of Three Choices
Competence in exercising discipline	25	50%	23	49%
Thorough knowledge of subject matter	17	34%	23	48.9%
Youthful in age and/or outlook	2	4%	2	4.3%
Sympathy in dealing with personal problems of pupils	5	10%	6	12.8%
Ability to gain respect of pupils	32	64%	22	46.8%
Fairness and impartiality in dealing with pupils	23	46%	28	59.6%
Special training for teaching deprived students	4	8%	1	2.3%
Patience and self assurance in the face of exasperating or irritating pupil behavior	26	52%	22	46.8%
Willingness to accept and try out new ideas	4	8%	9	19.2%

TABLE 2.--Continued

Attribute	Number of Teachers In Black Schools Who Made The Attribute One Of Three Choices	Percent of Teachers In Black Schools Who Made The Attribute One Of Three Choices	Number of Teachers In White Schools Who Made The Attribute One Of Three Choices	Percent of Teachers In White Schools Who Made The Attribute One Of Three Choices
Genuine liking for black students	11	22%	3	6.4%
One who can communicate with parents	0	0%	0	0%
Being the same race as the majority of the student body	1	2%	2	4.3%

TABLE 3.--Three Most Essential Teacher Attributes Needed for Success as Perceived by Teachers In Defacto Segregated Black Schools.

Attribute	Number of Black Teachers In Black Schools Who Made The Attribute One Of Three Choices	Percent of Black Teachers In Black Schools Who Made The Attribute One Of Three Choices	Number of White Teachers In Black Schools Who Made The Attribute One Of Three Choices	Percent of White Teachers In Black Schools Who Made The Attribute One Of Three Choices
Competence in exercising discipline	12	48%	13	52%
Thorought knowledge of subject matter	9	36%	8	32%
Youthful in age and/or outlook	2	8%	0	0%
Sympathy in dealing with personal problems of pupils	2	8%	3	12%
Ability to gain respect of pupils	19	76%	13	52%
Fairness and impartiality in dealing with pupils	10	40%	13	52%
Special training for teaching deprived students	1	4%	3	12%
Patience and self assurance in the face of exasperating or irritating pupil behavior	11	44%	15	60%
Willingness to accept and try out new ideas	2	8%	2	8%

TABLE 3.--Continued

Attribute	Number of Black Teachers In Black Schools Who Made The Attribute One Of Three Choices	Percent of Black Teachers In Black Schools Who Made The Attribute One Of Three Choices	Number of White Teachers In Black Schools Who Made The Attribute One Of Three Choices	Percent of White Teachers In Black Schools Who Made The Attribute One Of Three Choices
Genuine liking for black students	6	24%	5	20%
One who can communicate with parents	0	0%	0	0%
Being the same race as the majority of the student body	1	4%	0	0%

moment correlation coefficient, computed using the percent of teachers who made the attribute one of their three choices, was used to make a comparison between teachers in Black schools and teachers in White schools. The same test statistic was used to compare Black and White teachers in Black schools on their responses to the questionnaire. The results, reported herein, establish that there is a significantly high correlation, r = .81 significant at .01 level, between the choices of teachers in Black schools and the choices of teachers in White schools on the list of most essential teachers attributes needed to be successful in their school. The study also demonstrates a high correlation, r = .81 significant at .01 level, between the choices of Black teachers in Black schools and White teachers in Black schools on the teacher attribute list.

Conclusion

Although the evidence indicates that teachers; in defacto segregated high schools, responses to this questionnaire on teacher attributes were highly correlated, in no way does it infer that these teacher attributes will improve student learning. In fact, it does not even indicate that the chosen attributes are the most important attributes of a successful teacher, but it is ample evidence to lead us to investigate further to determine if in fact students do achieve more in classes where teachers possess the attributes most chosen in this study.